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ABSTRACT

Reading students whose reading skills are being improved need to learn expository writing in order to be able to organize and express thoughts on paper. This document presents a systematic approach for teaching writing as part of the total communication process and consists of five units. "The Expository Paragraph," designed for use in a skills laboratory, includes an outline, supplementary material, and exercises. "The Interior Development of the Paragraph" may be used in the English classroom or the skills laboratory and does not rely on any audiovisual aids. "The Expository Essay," for use in the junior year of English, is self-paced, based on personal experience rather than on literature, and uses no audiovisual materials. "Structure of Expository Composition" diagrams the relationship and similarities between the paragraph and the essay, and "Composition Materials" lists materials appropriate to particular skills which are available in the skills lab of the author. (JM)

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READING STUDENTS CAN WRITE

A Workshop Presented at the

International Reading Association Convention

May, 1975

New York City

by

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CS 002 504

In our attempts to improve the reading skills of our reading students, we often create a womb of security for them. We disguise the educational process with games, high interest books, kits, and contracts tailored to their individual needs and abilities. We guarantee each student success within our walls. Too often, however, we forget that when he leaves our shelter, the student faces a world that does not pamper him.

We do the student a disservice if we divorce his reading problems from the other educational experiences he must be involved with during the day. Most of what he is asked to do in and out of the traditional English classroom involves expository writing. He is asked, for example, to write about literature, to summarize historic facts, to analyze and synthesize scientific information.

We look at reading as the receiving end of a communication continuum; the giving end is writing. What a student reads affects his thoughts or feelings. Our job is to help him organize his thoughts for himself, and if asked to write about them, for his audience. We do this by teaching him to write a good expository paragraph, and later, if appropriate, an expository essay as the natural expansion of that paragraph form.

There is another reason why we teach expository writing. Every human being is locked within his own walls. Part of the human situation is the need to establish lines of communication with the self and between the self and the rest of humanity. Being able to communicate our thoughts on paper is one way of

organizing them and preserving them. We help students transform raw experience into thought, thought into speech, speech into print. Speaking to students about writing as a human act rather than as a school-time exercise is one way of helping them see its importance.

We are committed to the idea that reading students need to be--and can be--taught to write. With these thoughts in mind, we have incorporated into our skills lab program a systematic approach for teaching writing as part of a total communication experience. The approach we use is rhetorical in nature and emphasizes organization and effectiveness in writing, the fundamental principles of sentence construction, arrangement of ideas, and style. We teach composition both individually and in small groups. It is the individual approach I wish to share. The following materials were written by teachers at Agoura High School, Las Virgenes Unified School Distict, Westlake Village, California.

The first instructional unit is entitled "The Expository Paragraph." It was developed by Sue Coleman for use in the skills laboratory but is also used in the English classroom.

The second paragraph unit is entitled "The Interior Development of the Paragraph." It was developed by Judy Anker for use in the English classroom but has proved useful to and understandable by students in the skills lab. It does not rely on any audio-visual materials.

"The Expository Essay" unit was developed by Doug Litten and other teachers of eleventh grade English for use in the junior year of English. It is self-paced, based on personal experience

rather than literature, and uses no audio-visual materials. Because it strips the composition process to the core, to the framework, of the essay, we have found it most intelligible to the student in the skills lab.

The last two materials were developed by me. One, "Structure of Expository Composition," diagrams the relationship and the similarities between the paragraph and the essay. It is most useful in teaching the student that the essay is the natural expansion of the paragraph. The other, "Composition Materials," is part of a large and detailed catalogue of materials available in our skills lab. It is designed so that given a particular skill to teach, the instructor has at his fingertips a list of all materials in our lab suitable--by manufacturer design or from personal experience--for teaching that skill. This catalogue does not by any means include all materials manufactured or published, nor does it endorse any; it is merely a comprehensive inventory of the materials in <u>our</u> lab as of June, 1974.

It is my hope that these materials prove helpful to instructors interested in teaching this important and often-neglected area.

THE EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH

Perhaps the main reason why some people cannot write good paragraphs is that they do not really know what a paragraph is. Oh, they know what a paragraph looks like, of course; they can tell you how many paragraphs there are on a particular page or in a certain article. They can tell this much without even reading the page or the article; they simply look for the outward signs. They know that every group of sentences that begins with an indentation is called a "paragraph."

But what makes a group of sentences a paragraph? Why does a writer group sentences together? Why are there indentation marks? Does the author just put them wherever he thinks they will look right?

You can answer these questions only if you know what a paragraph is. This packet is designed to give you that information. It will show you how you can write not just a paragraph, but a <u>good</u> paragraph.

If, at any time during your work on this packet, something is not clear or you feel that you need more practice exercises in a specific area, see me. I will select other materials for you. You will be working at your own speed for the most part and your success will depend on how seriously you approach your work.

I. Understanding the Paragraph

A. Objective: The student will be able to identify a paragraph as a group of sentences that work closely together to make one central idea clear.

B. Activities:
1. Listen to EDL tape EA 5, "Understanding the Paragraph," and complete the worksheet as you listen.
2. Do Packet Exercise 1.

II. Writing the Paragraph

A. Objective: Given a choice of topics, the student will be able to select one and develop that topic in a paragraph.

B. Activities:
1. Listen to EDL tape FA 8, "Writing the Paragraph," and complete the worksheet as you listen.
2. See Filmstrip House filmstrip 1, "The Paragraph Sense," and take notes as you watch.
3. Do Tactics I, Card 39, Exercises 1, 2, 3.
4. Do Packet Exercise 2.
5. Do Packet Exercise 3.

III. Developing a Topic

A. Objective: Given a topic, the student will be able to develop it in paragraph form through a variety of methods.
B. Activities:
1. See Filmstrip House filmstrip 2, "Developing a Topic," and take notes as you watch.
2. Do Tactics I, Card 40, Exercises 1, 2, 3, 4.
3. Read Packet Supplement A, "How to Make a Topic Clear."
4. Do Packet Exercises 4, 5, 6, 7.

IV. The Topic Sentence

A. Objective: Given a topic, the student will be able to write a topic sentence that makes a definite assertion about that topic.
B. Activities:
1. Read Packet Supplement B.
2. Do Tactics I, Card 41, Exercises 5, 6.
3. Do Tactics I, Card 42, Exercises 7, 8.
4. Do Tactics I, Card 43, Exercises 9, 10.

V. Unity and Coherence

A. Objective: Given a topic, the student will be able to write a paragraph that is developed in a unified and coherent manner.
B. Activities:
1. See Filmstrip House filmstrip 3, "Unity and Coherence," and take notes as you watch.
2. Listen to EDL tape JKL 2, "Following Sequence," and complete the worksheet as you listen.
3. Do Packet Exercise 8.
4. See Filmstrip House filmstrip 4, "Transitions," and take notes as you watch.
5. Do Packet Exercise 9.

VI. Summary

A. Objective: Given a paragraph, the student will be able to evaluate it by answering a series of questions about it.
B. Activities:
1. Read Packet Supplement C.
2. Do Packet Exercise 10.
3. Do Packet Exercise 11.

VII. Enrichment

A. Objective: Given several samples of paragraphs, the student will be able to differentiate between the types of paragraphs.
B. Activities:
1. Listen to EDL tape GHI-1 15, "Paragraphs that Explain," and complete the worksheet as you listen.
2. Listen to EDL tape GHI-1 14, "Paragraphs that Describe," and complete the worksheet as you listen.
3. Listen to EDL tape GHI-1 13, "Paragraphs that Tell a Story," and complete the worksheet as you listen.

MASTERY PARAGRAPH ASSIGNMENT

IACKET SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement A

How to Make a Topic Clear:

No matter what your purpose is in writing a theme--to tell about something that happened, to explain how to do something, to persuade others to think as you do, or simply to entertain your readers with an amusing story--your chief concern should be to make your ideas clear. It is not enough for you to know what you mean; your job is to make your meaning clear to your readers. How can you do this?

Supply Details

The best way to make your meaning clear is to make sure that each paragraph you write contains enough specific details to show the readers exactly what you have in mind. The details may be of various kinds, depending on what the topic of the paragraph is.

Give Examples

To make clear to your readers why something is so, you may want to give examples that illustrate the point you are trying to make. The more unusual the example the better because it will help your reader remember the idea you were trying to convey.

Give Reasons

Suppose you are writing a theme comparing independent stores and chain stores. If in one paragraph you merely state that in your opinion the independent store has many advantages and that therefore people should shop there, you will not be very convincing to your readers. But if you have specific reasons to back up your opinion, your readers will understand why you think as you do.

Point Out Similarities and Differences

Sometimes the best way to make a topic clear is to give details that point out specific similarities and differences.

Tell an Incident

At other times the best way to make a topic clear is to give the details of an incident that illustrates the point you want to make.

Supplement B

The Topic Sentence:

To make it easy for readers to know what topic is going to be discussed in a certain paragraph, writers often begin the paragraph with a topic sentence. The topic sentence states the main thought of the paragraph in general terms. It makes an assertion about the topic to be developed in the paragraph.

Sometimes the writer uses a topic sentence at the end of a paragraph to summarize the main thought of that paragraph for the reader before he moves on to the next thought and the next paragraph.

Topic sentences are useful to you in two ways. First, they help you as a reader, since they let you know in a few words the central idea of the paragraphs you read. Second, and more important, they are useful to you as a writer. Writing paragraphs that stick to the topic is not easy, especially for a beginning writer. So while you are learning to write good paragraphs, you will find it helpful to use topic sentences frequently. They will remind you what the central idea of the paragraphs should be and will keep you from straying from the topic while you are writing.

Supplement C

Summing Up:

The main points of this packet can be summarized in very brief form:

1. A good paragraph makes the topic clear. You can make the topic of each paragraph clear to the reader by supplying enough specific, concrete details to show him exactly what you mean.

2. A good paragraph sticks to the topic. Thinking through a topic before you start writing will keep you from including sentences that have nothing to do with the topic. Expressing the main thought in a topic sentence will help you stick to the topic while writing.

3. In a good paragraph the thought is easy to follow. To make it easy for your reader to follow the thought, present the details in a sensible order and use direct linking words and indirect links to tie the sentences together.

PACKET EXERCISES

Exercise 1

The following passage was originally published as two paragraphs, each covering a different phase of the subject. Read the passage and decide where the indentation for the second paragraph should be. On a sheet of paper, write the first three words of the sentence that should be indented. Then explain why you would start the second paragraph at this point.

Termites do about forty million dollars worth of damage a year. One reason that they can do so much damage is that many of our buildings are poorly constructed. Where wood is placed directly on the ground, termites can enter it. Telephone posts that have not been treated with coal tar or creosote appeal to them as much as a tree stump in a field--they don't know the difference. In their search for a place to live they invade ships, bridges, grain elevators, stored material such as books; and they have even been known to attack linen, shoes, trees, plants, and flowers. Man is the termites' greatest enemy. We can build our houses and other buildings more carefully, putting them on concrete or other foundations that the termites cannot penetrate. The termites also have some natural enemies. They are subject to disease caused by molds and bacteria that kills a great many of them. Spiders, toads, frogs, lizards, wasps, snakes, and ants prey on them. And many birds help keep them under control--especially the woodpecker, roadrunner, and flicker.

Exercise 2

All the details in each of the following paragraphs held make clear the particular topic the writer is discussing. Read each paragraph carefully and decide which of the three topics listed below it most accurately tells the central idea of the paragraph. Write the topics you choose on a sheet of paper and be ready to explain why they are the right ones.

1. All bottles containing poisonous ingredients should be labeled with a red label. This plan, however, is not really safe unless one can see which bottle he is about to use. It has been recommended that such bottles have a small bell attached to them, so that even at night when one is sleepy, he will know when he has the wrong bottle in his hands. Wrapping a piece of sandpaper around the bottle is a good idea. Some pins stuck in the cork is another way to indicate that a bottle contains poison.

The topic of the paragraph is:
a) People often accidentally drink poison.
b) Poison should be kept in bottles with a red label.
c) Various ways to prevent people from drinking poison by mistake.

2. Grant Wood soon became known in Cedar Rapids as the "boy who minds the doctor's horse." He rode in the doctor's buggy, after school hours, and held the horse while the doctor, satchel in hand, went into a house to visit a sick patient. But he needed more money than the doctor could pay to support his mother and the three younger children, so he took every job the town had to offer. He mowed lawns in summer and shoveled snow in the winter. He milked the neighbor's cows in the early morning before he went to school, and again in the late afternoon when he had returned. For the food the family ate, he raised sweet corn and potatoes and tomatoes in the backyard.

The topic of the paragraph is:
a) Grant Wood was well known by the people of Cedar Rapids
b) How Grant Wood managed to support his family
c) Grant Wood's great love for horses

Exercise 3

Choose one of the following sentences to use as the opening sentence of a paragraph of 100-150 words. The way each sentence is worded shows you what the topic of the paragraph is to be. Think over the topic and decide what specific details you will use to develop it in your paragraph. Write the paragraph on scratch paper first. After revising this first draft, copy it in ink on notebook paper. Hand in both your first draft and your revision. (If none of the suggested topics interests you, use one of your own.)

1. Being a baby sitter is not always an easy job.
2. You can tell quite a bit about people's character by the way they dress.
3. If I were a dog, I'd hate to live in a city.
4. Miss _____, my _____, has no sense of humor.
5. I never let bad weather interfere with my plans, as some people do.
6. Many high school students don't know how to study.
7. Last week I learned the importance of "A stitch in time saves nine."
8. High school is more interesting than junior high school.
9. Being the baby of the family is not always an advantage.
10. A bargain is not always a bargain.

Exercise 4

In each of the following paragraphs one sentence that is not closely related to the main topic of the paragraph has been added. Read the paragraph carefully. On a sheet of paper, write 1) the topic presented in each paragraph and 2) the added sentence.

1. The country offers no escape from accidents. In fact, the farm offers an exceptional variety of possible mishaps, some of them with very serious possibilities. Many accidents have resulted from the use of power or horse-drawn machinery. The modern farmer could not get along without tractors and other farm machines, for they have made it possible to produce tremendous

crops with a minimum of hired hands. Occasionally the farmer or one of his hands is seriously injured by livestock. The danger of infection through cuts or other such injuries is especially great on the farm, and calls for immediate and thorough disinfection, and in many cases an injection of serum to prevent tetanus.

2. Tools employed by the beaver are as efficient as they are simple. Four curved front teeth are the principal instruments, with the clever forepaws playing second part. These front teeth are some two and one-half inches long, from base to tip, including the part within the jaw. They grow constantly and the cutting edge is replaced as wear occurs, an ideal arrangement for an animal that will bite through a four-inch tree in twenty minutes. Grinding teeth, further back, complete the dental equipment and are employed to crush the bark before it is swallowed. Beavers never eat fish, fowl or insects; they are vegetarians.

Exercise 5

Each of the following numbered items is the main topic for one of the paragraphs in a theme. After each topic are listed five details. Three of these details stick to the topic and should be used in developing the paragraph. The other two are not closely related to the topic and should not be used. On a sheet of paper, copy each topic. Under it, list the three details that should be used in the paragraph to make the topic clear.

1. Topic: Neighborhood pests
   a) The borrowers who forget to return what they borrow
   b) The sloppy ones who let their property get run down
   c) Many beautiful, well-kept homes in our neighborhood
   d) The back-fence gossipers who criticize everyone else
   e) Attractive fences adding to the appearance of the yards

2. Topic: The advantages of shopping at chain stores
   a) Prices are usually lower than in small, independent stores
   b) Quicker service because shopper helps himself
   c) First grocery chain was started by the A & P Company
   d) Wider selection of brands of canned goods
   e) Tin cans are made mostly of steel

3. Topic: How the average person can help conserve wildlife
   a) Being careful with fire
   b) Not picking or destroying wild flowers
   c) Feeding birds and building homes for them
   d) Song birds are found in the South
   e) The mystery of migration

4. Topic: The causes of soil waste in our country
   a) Soil from dry plains, prairies, and sandy regions carried away by wind
   b) Soil in hilly regions carried away by heavy rains
   c) Poor farming leads to loss of fertility and makes soil worthless
   d) American farmers are interested in scientific farming
   e) Large farms are rare in European countries

5. Topic: The beneficial results of advertising
   a) Calls attention to new products
   b) By increasing sales, leads to lower prices
   c) TV commercials are improving
   d) Expense of advertising
   e) Spreads useful information about developments in science and medicine

Exercise 6

Choose one of the following topic sentences and write a paragraph that makes the topic clear. Feel free to use any detials you may learn from researching any of the topics, but state the details in your own words. Make sure that every sentence in your paragraph sticks to the idea in the topic sentence.

1. The men of the FBI go through a rigorous training program.
2. It isn't easy today to choose a career.
3. Animals know a lot more than we people think.
4. Warm human contact as an infant is important for a child's development.
5. A college degree is no longer a guarantee that an applicant will land a job.

Exercise 7

Suppose that each of the following numbered items is the topic of a paragraph you are to write. After each topic are listed several details to be used in the paragraph. Copy each topic on a sheet of paper. Below the topic, list the details in what you consider the most sensible or effective order. Compare lists and be ready to give reasons for the order you used.

1. Why my first babysitting job was my last
   a) Sleeping soundly while the boys damage the upstairs rooms
   b) Being awakened by the Martins at midnight
   c) Phone call from Mrs. Martin, mother of two boys, offering the job
   d) Meeting the children and getting instructions
   e) Troubles in getting children to bed
   f) Settling down in the Martin living room to enjoy TV
   g) Long streetcar and bus rides to get to the Martin's house
   h) Falling asleep during the long TV commercial
   i) The endless ride home in a car driven by angry Mr. Martin
   j) Apologize to the Martins for what had happened

2. How to wallpaper a room
   a) Let filler coat dry thoroughly--24 hours
   b) Apply paste to strips of paper
   c) Fill cracks with plaster of Paris
   d) Sandpaper edges of cracks to remove excess plaster
   e) Smooth paper with wall brush, slowly working out wrinkles
   f) Brush filler coat over the walls
   g) Remove old wallpaper and remove paste
   h) Paste strips on wall
   i) Cut strips into right length

3. Sure ways to lose friends
   a) Be moody or overeager to argue with them
   b) Say mean things about them in their presence
   c) Never laugh at the jokes they tell
   d) Say mean things about them behind their backs
   e) Borrow money often and be slow in returning it
   f) Be late for dates with them
   g) Break dates with them to go with someone else

Exercise 8

The sentences in the following groups are linked together by specific connecting words that show how the details are related. On a sheet of paper, write the number of the group and write the direct linking word(s) used in the group.

1. Jerry unfolded the letter and began reading. At first he seemed puzzled. Then an angry look came into his eyes. Before long he was sputtering with rage.

2. The parking meters are, I will admit, a nuisance to shoppers, who do not always have change with them. On the other hand, having the meters has kept people from leaving their cars parked for unnecessarily long periods in busy shopping districts.

3. Liquids evaporate at all temperatures, high or low. However, the hotter the liquid becomes, the faster the rate of evaporation.

4. Phil tugged hard at the ladder, trying to lift it so that Bob could crawl free. Meanwhile I ran back to the tool shed to get help. A minute later I was back, with Mr. Evans only a step behind me.

Exercise 9

The sentences in each of the following paragraphs have been put in a hodgepodge order. Read the sentences and decide in what order they would have to be arranged so that the main thought could easily be followed. Copy the paragraphs on a sheet of paper, putting the sentences in the right order. Then, draw a circle around all the direct linking words and the indirect links that you can find to show that the order you used is the order the writers used.

1. a) At six and seven, young Bobby Feller talked about becoming a ballplayer the way other kids talk about growing up to be fireman, a cop, a cowboy.
   b) Bob still has the essay.
   c) When Bobby was three years old, the farmhouse began to fill up with all the books on baseball that Bill Feller could buy.
   d) At eight, when asked to write an essay about a tree, the Feller boy's words told how an oak could be made into home plate.

2. a) It means that you must be careful in the excitement of an English game not to shout out remarks which everyone in America would understand but which the British might think insulting.
   b) In America the crowd would probably shout, "Take him out!"
   c) If a fielder misses a catch at cricket, the spectators will shout, "Good try," even if it looks to you like a bad fumble.
   d) This contrast should be remembered.
   e) The British character is clearly seen at sports contests.
   f) The English crowds at football or cricket matches are more orderly and more polite than American fans.

Exercise 10

Choose one of the following topics (or substitute one of your own) as the topic for a paragraph of from 150 to 200 words.

1. The importance of patience in getting along with people
2. How to use leisure time instead of wasting it
3. Advertisements that promise the impossible
4. Learning from our mistakes
5. A secret ambition
6. Apologizing without using words

Exercise 11

Exchange the paragraph you wrote for Exercise 10 with that of a classmate. Read his paragraph carefully. On a sheet of paper, write the answers to the following questions. Then return the paragraph, with your answers, to the owner.

What is the topic of the paragraph? Is the topic specifically stated in a sentence? If so, what is the sentence? Does it come at the beginning or end of the paragraph?

Do all the sentences stick to the topic? Which, if any, do not?

Do you think the writer has used enough details to make the topic clear? Would you like more details? Of what kind?

Did you find it easy or hard to follow the thought from sentence to sentence? What direct linking words and indirect links did the writer use to tie the sentences together?

What suggestions can you make that would help the writer improve the paragraph?

INTERIOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARAGRAPH

Major Support

Once you have a definite controlling idea clearly fixed in mind, you are ready to consider how you will support it. You should select from all you know about your subject such information as you need to support this controlling idea. The controlling idea should be used to sort and select this information in such a way that everything you put in the paragraph rightfully belongs there. Remember that each paragraph should be unified; that is, you must be able to see how each supporting sentence in the paragraph contributes to the understanding of the topic sentence.

For example, each sentence in the following paragraph might read as a "because statement" in support of the controlling idea.

Charles Jones was a scheming politican.
because: At picnics near election time he distributed free to prospective voters all the ice cream they could eat.
because: He created opportunities to do favors for anyone who could control votes at polling places in the district.
because: He made his various business activities suit legislation that could draft or promote him.

Notice the two important items:

(1) The whole series is unified. All three supporting statements explain how Charles Jones is a scheming politician.
(2) The "because statements" are major supporting statements designed to convince the reader of the truth of the controlling idea.

If we were to number this paragraph we would give the topic sentence a number 1 and each of the major supporting statements a number 2.

Exercise 1: Pick out and underline the controlling idea in the following paragraph. Put a number 2 by the major supporting statements. Do this work on your own paper and copy the whole paragraph before you begin numbering.

A cornfield in July is a sultry place. The soil is hot and dry. The wind comes across the lazily murmuring leaves laden with a warm, sickening smell drawn from the rapidly growing, broad-flung banners of the corn. The sun, nearly vertical, drops a flag of dazzling light upon the field over which the cool shadows run, only to make the heat seem more intense.

Minor Support

It is also possible to have minor support which further explains major support. As you refine your writing skills, you will want to be certain to develop adequately your support by using examples for your major support. Each minor support statement is a number 3 sentence.

The last sentence of your paragraph will be your concluding sentence. This sentence repeats, adds to, or develops the topic sentence. This is a number 4 sentence.

Exercise 2: In the following examples, the minor support statements have been omitted and only the major support statements remain. Copy this whole outline on your own paper and fill in the minor supports.

1. Topic sentence: In the course of a day, a student does far more than just attend classes.

    2. Major support: In order to maintain his health, he needs exercise.

        3.

        3.

    2. Major support: Because much of what he must learn in a course is not provided in the classroom, he is required to do outside assignments in the library.

        3.

        3.

    2. Major support: Finally, for the education beyond books, he participates in outside activities.

        3.

        3.

4. Concluding sentence: Add one of your own.

Exercise 3: Now you are ready to develop an outline for a paragraph in which there will be only major supporting statements. Select one of the following topics. Carefully formulate your topic sentence and make your controlling idea clear and definite. Limit the topic so it can be discussed in 4-6 sentences. Remember that each major support sentence is a number 2 sentence. Add a concluding statement at the end (a number 4 sentence).

Annoyances of television commercials
Advantages (or disadvantages) of going to school
Importance of being oneself
Importance of being well-read

Exercise 4: Select one of the remaining topics in exercise 3 and develop an outline with major support and minor support. Add a concluding statement. Your topic should be able to be discussed in 6-12 sentences.

THE EXPOSITORY ESSAY

Throughout your high school and in your future college or business careers you will be asked to express yourself in writing. This expression will come primarily in the form of exposition. Exposition deals with explaining something to someone else. This exposition may be used by itself, or it may take a more complicated form and be linked with persuasion. In that case you would be called on to explain certain facts or factors in order to convince your teacher, employer, or customer that you understand what you are talking about, and that they should agree with you. Through the exercises which follow, I hope that each of you will become more aware of the possibilities that are available to you in essay writing and will make use of them.

The Introduction

The first contact you have with your reader is in the introduction of your paper. This is where you say hello, state your purpose for writing, and set the stage for what is to follow. The introduction contains three major parts:

(1) Statement of purpose (thesis statement)
(2) Statement of organization
(3) Attention-getting device

Each of these areas has a definite reason for being included in your introduction. Steps (1) and (2) are used to insure clarity and organization. Step (3) is used to attract interest so your reader will read your paper.

A thesis statement is necessary for both you and your reader. It helps to make clear exactly what you are going to show him in your essay. It also serves as a good reminder to you, the writer, when you begin to wander from your stated purpose. The thesis statement is the "I intend to show..." (or "I intend to prove...") step.

Many people will approach the same topic in many different ways. You bring your own personality, background, and prejudices into your writing, and that is what makes it uniquely yours. When a topic is broad and does not call for a very specific answer, you are given a great deal of freedom. You may interpret the subject as you see fit. However, if a specific question is asked, you must deal with it and not beat around the bush.

Let us look at an example of a broad topic--religion. Here are some thesis statements which narrow down this broad topic. As you can see, there are innumerable approaches which can be taken. The approach you choose will depend upon your interests and beliefs and upon the information available to you.

(1) Religion has progressed through the ages. (or, has not progressed)
(2) Man needs religion. (or, does not need)
(3) Religion is no longer necessary to man. (or, is still necessary)
(4) The religions of the East are better than the religions of the West.
(5) The major religions of America are contributing to the well-being of our country.
(6) Minority religions are allowed more freedom in this country than in the Soviet Union.
(7) The Protestant religion is very important in the U.S.
(8) Religion should not be a qualification for holding political office.
(9) Religion is of little value to the younger generation.
(10) Religion is a main comfort to the older generation.

On the other hand, if you are asked to write an essay on the character of Willy Loman (Death of a Salesman) or on John and Lorraine (The Pigman), for example you may not have as much leeway, but you still can exercise your intelligence, creativity, and information resources to form an interesting thesis statement. These examples show that there is room for individuality even here.

(1) Willy Loman is nothing more than a pathetic old man and cannot be considered a tragic hero.
(2) Although Willy Loman is a failure at his job and in his home, he is a man of heroic proportions.
(3) To understand the character of Willy Loman is to understand the inevitability of his destruction in modern day America.
(4) It is no surprise that both Lorraine and John believe magic is the most important thing in life.
(5) Lorraine and John are responsible for Mr. Pignati's heart attack.
(6) Mr. Conlan was right in saying that John should get to a psychiatrist.

A good thesis statement should pass two tests:

(1) It should be argumentative (i.e., the reader can agree or disagree with it).
(2) It should be significant.

Practice 1: Write a thesis statement for three of the topics listed below.

boys	drugs	cars	murder	politics
girls	sports	movies	hobbies	teenage marriages
school	jobs	clothes	television	school integration

A statement of organization is necessary to get your reader prepared for what will follow. This step will help to make your essays more organized and less disjointed. It forces an early decision on organization, and you must then follow through. The statement of organization is the "I will show this by..." step.

Although there are many ways of organizing an essay, there may be times when you don't know what order to use. Here are some suggestions--but no matter which you choose, remember to make the pattern clear in your statement of organization.

(1) past-present-future (chronological)
(2) pro-con (advantages vs. disadvantages)
(3) top to bottom or side to side (spatial)
(4) author said, character said and did. others said
(5) first, second, third (most frequently used in English III)

There are four tests for any good statement of organization:

(1) It tells us how many supporting paragraphs (points) the essay will use to prove the thesis.
(2) It tells the reader what each of those supporting paragraphs will be about (i.e., it tells the reader what points will be used in each paragraph's topic sentence).
(3) Each point of the statement of organization should be relevant to a proof of the thesis.
(4) Each of the points mentioned in the statement of organization should be arguable (i.e., in need of further supporting details and explanations before the reader can accept it).

Practice 2: For each thesis statement written for practice 1, write a statement of organization and each time use a different organizational pattern.

There are many attention-getting devices. These will be considered once you have mastered the essentials of the essay form.

The Body

When you move from the introduction to the body of the essay. remember to begin each supporting paragraph with a topic sentence. There are three tests for a good topic sentence:

(1) It should state the topic of the paragraph.
(2) That topic should reflect one of the points made in the S.O.
(3) The topic sentence should be expressed in an arguable fashion.

Practice 3: Write three topic sentences for the supporting paragraphs that would follow each of the introductory paragraphs you just completed in practice 2.

No matter which pattern of organization you choose there is still a necessity to support your statements. Support helps to show that you really know what you are talking about, and it creates belief in your reader. Again there are several ways to achieve support. Some of these are:

(1) statistics
(2) examples
(3) specific facts
(4) quotations from authorities
(5) personal experiences

The type of proof you select will depend on your topic and the sources available to you. When you are writing about a piece of literature, as often you will do in English, your proof will be quotations and references taken directly from the story you are writing about. Be sure that the details you use are clearly connected with the point of the supporting paragraph. If the connection is not obvious, then an explanation must be given.

These are the tests for good support:

(1) The details used must prove that the assertion of the topic sentence is correct.
(2) The details are factual and thus inarguable.
(3) The connection between the details and the topic sentence is clear or is explained.

Practice 4: Write supporting paragraphs for each topic sentence you wrote in practice 3. Make sure your paragraphs include a topic sentence which gives a reason that supports the thesis and supporting details from one or more of the above listed kinds of support.

The Conclusion

After you have completed the body of your essay you are ready to say goodbye, but you want to make sure that you get the last word in and make your point effectively. Your conclusion is your last chance to convince or to impress your reader. The clue to good writing is:

(1) Tell the reader what you are going to say and how you are going to say it (the introduction)
(2) Say it (the body)
(3) Tell the reader what you have said and how you said it (the conclusion)

The conclusion sums up by restating the S.O. and the thesis statement. For the time being, we will use a simple form which restates the S.O. and the thesis: "By examining (restate the S.O.), I have shown (restate your thesis and say that you have proved it)."

Practice 5: Using any of the introductions and bodies developed earlier, add a conclusion which summarizes.

The Final Touches

There are some final touches which make the essay complete:

(1) Proper transitions
(2) Attention-getting devices in the opening paragraph
(3) Concluding devices appropriate to the introduction and the body

Transitions are those words or statements which link ideas together and especially tie the reason back into the thesis. A proper use of transitions in an essay makes your writing flow and read easily. If you lack transitions your writing will appear jerky and choppy.

These words work well in linking one sentence to another within a paragraph:

thus	moreover	although	however	next	but
then	therefore	since	nevertheless	when	

When you want to link paragraphs a little more is necessary. It requires a logical progression or organization. Transitions may be obvious or subtle.

You may simply show transitions by saying, "My next point..." or "Second..." This technique is called numbering your ideas. Here are some transitions that work well between paragraphs:

First supporting paragraph

To begin with...
The first reason that...is...
First...

Second supporting paragraph

Another point to consider...
A second reason that...is...
Second...
If it can be said that (restate first reason), then it can also be said that...

Third supporting paragraph

Still another reason is...
Third...
Finally...] to be used when third supporting paragraph
A final point...] is final supporting paragraph

Practice 6: Reread all of the paragraphs and essays you have written thus far. Underline all of the transitions you have used. If there are none and there should be, add them.

Attention-getting devices are given in these examples:

(1) A quotation

Robert Frost once wrote:
Before I built a wall, I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall.
That wants it down....
Frost's wall stands symbolic of all walls, and most expecially of the Berlin Wall. For in Berlin, that wall separates freedom and communism.

(2) An anecdote or short story

Two weeks ago the police invaded the headquarters of the Black Panthers.

My father is a university professor. For three years he was with a commission on economic aid in the Far East.

(3) A startling statement

> This nation is headed for a bloodbath that may be far more murderous than any civil war this world has known.
>
> If traffic accidents continue to rise at the rate of the past few years, two of the thirty-six people reading this paper will be killed in traffic accidents in the next four years.

(4) A humorous story or joke

> A family I know just bought a new home in Los Angeles. On a clear day they can see the ocean--and their home is on the beach.

(5) Strawman opening

> Some people say that...but these people are wrong. I intend to prove that...

There are other devices for introductions; it is up to you to choose the one which is most appropriate to your taste. The tests for a good attention-getting device are:

(1) It is interesting.
(2) It is relevant to the thesis.
(3) It is believable and/or true.

Practice 7: Select one of the attention-getting devices listed above and write an introductory paragraph to an essay which begins with that device.

Concluding devices may be varied after mastering the basic conclusion. The essay may be enriched by using one of the following patterns as a final statement:

(1) A quotation
(2) A startling statement
(3) A humorous story
(4) A moral
(5) An anecdote
(6) A request for a particular action or attitude to be adopted
(7) A repetition of something used in the introduction

The tests for a good conclusion are:

(1) It restates the basic ideas of the thesis statement and statement of organization.
(2) It is consistent with the over-all tone of the essay.
(3) There is a smooth transition between the thesis statement, statement of organization, and the concluding device.

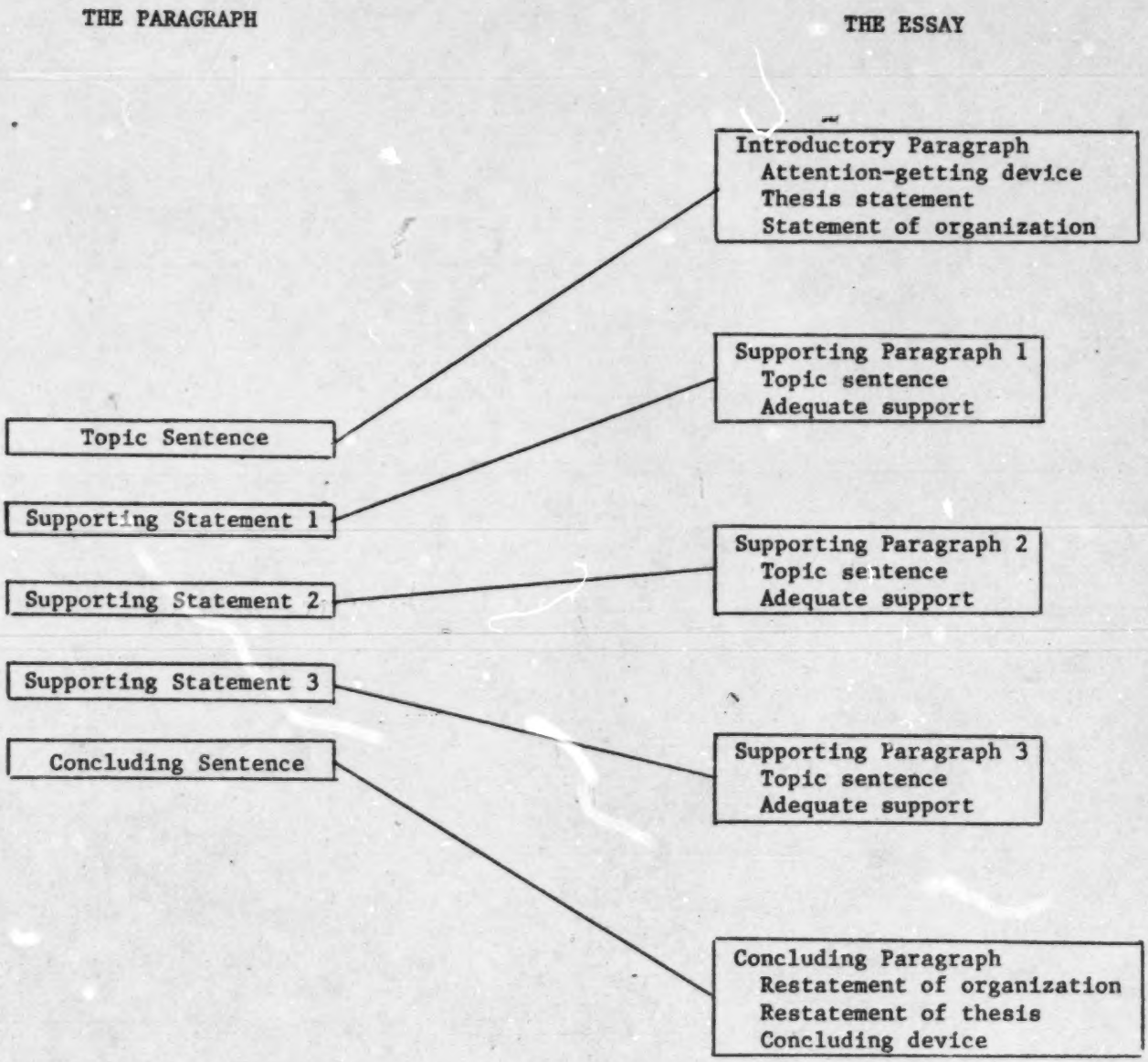
Practice 8: Select one of the above concluding devices and write a concluding paragraph which includes that device.

Now that you have completed the exercises in this unit you should have a better understanding of how to write an essay. The only way, however, that you will acquire a great deal of skill is by constant practice. The following exercise is meant to synthesize all that you have been doing in this unit.

Practice 9: Choose any topic and write a complete essay on that topic. Use your choice of introduction, support, and conclusion. At the decision of you and/or your teacher, your topic may be based on personal experience or on a story you have read.

STRUCTURE OF EXPOSITORY COMPOSITION

The expository paragraph and expository essay are similar in structure:
1) Each paragraph of the essay corresponds to an element of the paragraph;
2) Each paragraph of the essay follows the format of an expository paragraph.
The following chart diagrams this relationship.



COMPOSITION MATERIALS

I. The Paragraph

A. Tactics (oriented toward comprehension rather than composition)

1. Level I (9th) Cards 39-44: Paragraph Meaning

39	ex. 1-2	Topics
	3	Recognizing the Topic
40	4	Finding the Central Idea
41	5	Stating the Central Idea
	6	Finding the Central Idea
42	7	Finding the Topic Sentence
	8	Recognizing the Supporting Details
43	9-10	Finding the Central Idea
44	11-12	Stating the Central Idea

2. Level II (10th) Cards 29-34: Central Idea

29	ex. 1	What Makes a Paragraph
	2-3	How Ideas are Related
30	4	Recognizing the Central Idea
	5	Finding the Topic
31	6	Finding the Central Idea
	7	Stating the Central Idea
32	8-9	Topic Sentences
33	10	Supporting Details
34	11-12	Notetaking

B. EDL Tapes

EA (5th)	5 Understanding the Paragraph
FA (6th)	8 Writing Paragraphs
GHI-1 (7th-9th)	13 Paragraphs That Tell a Story
	14 Paragraphs That Describe
	15 Paragraphs That Explain

C. Filmstrips

Filmstrip House: The Paragraph
1. The Paragraph Sense
2. Developing a Topic
3. Unity and Coherence
4. Transitions and Connectives

Filmstrip House: Communication Power: Paragraph Power (with records)
1. Thinking in Paragraphs
2. Topic Sentence Power
3. Paragraph Unity Power
4. Paragraph Development

Filmstrip House: Writing and Revising (mainly essay with paragraph applicability)
1. The Title and the Opening Sentence
2. The Body of the Composition
3. The Body and the Closing Sentence
4. Revising and Final Editing

Eyegate (with records)
- 107 Developing Concrete Details
- 108 Revising the Composition
- 114 Composition Topics

D. Blueprints (9th)

Telling Things in Order	Unit 1,	Lesson 9,	Page 10
	5	9	56
	7	9	80
	8	10	93
	10	9	115
Writing Paragraphs (paragraph practice with specific emphases)			
One idea per paragraph	1	10	11
	2	10	22
	6	10	70
	9	10	104
Adequate support	5	10	57
	8	10	93
Sentence structure	3	10	34
	4	10	45
	7	10	81
	10	10	116

E. Frameworks (10th)

Telling Things in Order	Unit 1,	Lesson 9,	Page 21
	4	9	44
	8	9	92
Writing Paragraphs (paragraph practice with specific emphases)			
One idea per paragraph	1	10	11
	2	10	22
	4	10	45
	5	10	57
	7	10	71
	9	10	104
Adequate support	5	10	57
	8	10	93
	10	10	116
Sentence structure	3	10	34
	6	10	70

F. Structures (11th)

Writing Paragraphs	Unit 2,	Lesson 8,	Page 34- 35
	4	2	58- 59
	4	3	60- 61
	5	8	88- 89
	7	8	124-125
	8	8	142-143

G. Troubleshooters, Book 7/Lesson 3: Paragraphs

Page 30	ex. 21-22	Topic Sentences
32	23-26	Supporting Sentences
35	27	Writing Paragraphs

H. EDL Study Skills Cards (oriented toward comprehension rather than composition)

Finding Topics or Main Ideas	HH (8th)	4
	GG (7th)	1, 3
Finding Patterns		
Statement and Support	G (7th)	9
	GG (7th)	4
Question and Answer	G (7th)	7
	II (9th)	1
Sequence	GG (7th)	9
	HH (8th)	3
Conclusion and Proof	II (9th)	10
Comparisons	HH (8th)	6
Contrasts	G (7th)	4
Classifications	G (7th)	5

I. Programed Approach to Writing

1. Book I
   Chapter 1: The Topic Sentence
   6 sections, 92 frames (1-92)
   Paragraph assignments: frames 26, 41, 51, 74, 76, 79, 92
   Chapter 2: Time and Space Organization
   10 sections, 152 frames (93-245)
   Paragraph assignments: frames 141, 142, 165, 166, 176, 213, 216, 223, 236, 242, 244, 245
   Chapter 3: Cause and Effect Relationships
   3 sections, 84 frames (246-330)
   Paragraph assignments: frames 257, 283, 288, 305, 307, 309, 312, 314, 319, 330
   Chapter 4: General Review
   3 sections, 45 frames (331-376)
   Paragraph assignments: frames 348, 352, 355, 358, 361, 364, 369, 374, 376

2. Book II (types of paragraphs)

Chapter 1, frames	1- 68	Classification
2	69-184	Definition
3	185-260	Explanation
4	261-361	Narrative
5	362-412	Essay
6	413-452	Review

3. Book III
   Chapter 1, The Paragraph
   7 sections, 76 frames (1-76)

J. Patterns and Practice

1.	Level I	Short Paragraphs	Chap. 28,	Page 194-196
		Paragraph Outline: One Level	29	200-203
2	Level II	Writing Factual Statements	28	210-215

3. Level III The One-Level Outline Chapt. 18, Page 134-139
The Two-Level Outline 19 143-147
Writing Instructions and Reports 27 229-234

K. Countdown
Chapter 8 The Topic Sentence Page 73
Finding the Topic Sentence 74
Writing the Topic Sentence 76
Chapter 9 Grouping and Organizing Details 79
Grouping Words Dealing with the Same Subject 80
Fitting Facts Under Title Headings 82-86

L. ACE 301 (narrative paragraph) White pages 49, 57, 109-110, 111, 113, 121, 123, 129, 131, 133, 135

M. Interior Development of the Paragraph (see teacher-made unit)

N. The Expository Paragraph (see teacher-made unit)

II. The Essay

A. Filmstrips
Filmstrip House: Writing and Revising
1 The Title and Opening Sentence
2 The Body of the Composition
3 The Body and the Closing Sentence
4 Revising and Final Editing
Eyegate (with records)
107 Developing Concrete Details
108 Revising the Composition
114 Composition Topics

B. Patterns and Practice, Level III
The Two-Level Outline Chap. 19, Page 143-147

C. Programed Approach to Writing III

Chapter 2: The Essay	9 sections,	51 frames	(77-128)
Chapter 3: Ways of Developing Main Ideas	5	23	(129-162)
Chapter 4: Writing Essays About Literature	4	35	(163-198)

D. SRA Writing Laboratory: Exposition
Lesson 1 Picking Your Topic
2 Planning Ahead
3 Introducing Your Topic
Major Composition 1
4 Supporting Your Main Idea
5 Putting Your Ideas in Order
Major Composition 2
6 Defining Your Terms
7 Comparing Ideas
8 Using Appropriate Language
Major Composition 3
9 Finishing an Exposition
10 Review: Writing an Exposition
Major Composition 4

E. The Expository Essay (see teacher-made unit)

III. Creative Expression

A. Programed Approach to Writing III
Chapter 5: Descriptive Writing 7 sections, 48 frames (199-247)

B. SRA Writing Laboratory: The Narrative
Unit I Putting Things in Motion
II Setting the Scene
III Making the Picture Clearer
IV Presenting the People
V Making People Seem Real
VI Holding the Reader's Interest
VII Writing Better Sentences

C. Eyegate Filmstrips (with records)
109 Journal Keeping for Writers
110 Sample Journal Entries
111 Stop Looking and Start Seeing
112 Tips on Writing the Short Story
113 Tips on Writing the News Story

D. Blueprints (9th)
Writing Interesting Titles Unit 1, Lesson 2, Page 14

E. Structures (11th)

Writing a Short Story	6	8	106-107
Writing a News Story	7	1	110-111

F. Sources for creative inspiration
1. Stop, Look, and Write
2. The Writer's Eye
3. Open End
Weekly, in Scope
Collection of old activities
4. Expression
Weekly in Voice
Collection of old activities
5. Reader's Digest
Write On!
Hot Spot
6. Publisher's samples
7. ACE 301 White pages 49, 57, 109, 110-111, 113, 121, 123, 129, 131, 133, 135
8. Patterns and Practice--Creative Expression
Level I Pages 46, 64, 92, 112, 142, 168, 192, 208
II 27, 53, 77, 115, 147, 181, 219, 259
III 29, 59, 89, 121, 151, 201, 214, 278